



Unit .01

Session .02

God's Good People

Scripture



Genesis 1:26-31; 2:16-18,21-25

26 Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, the whole earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.” **27** So God created man in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female. **28** God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth.” **29** God also said, “Look, I have given you every seed-bearing plant on the surface of the entire earth and every tree whose fruit contains seed. This will be food for you, **30** for all the wildlife of the earth, for every bird of the sky, and for every creature that crawls on the earth—everything having the breath of life in it—I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. **31** God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed. Evening came and

then morning: the sixth day. ... **16** And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, **17** but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die.” **18** Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper corresponding to him.” ... **21** So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to come over the man, and he slept. God took one of his ribs and closed the flesh at that place. **22** Then the Lord God made the rib he had taken from the man into a woman and brought her to the man. **23** And the man said: This one, at last, is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called “woman,” for she was taken from man. **24** This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh. **25** Both the man and his wife were naked, yet felt no shame.

Intro Options



Main Point:
**God created people
uniquely in His Image.**

Option 1

Give each student a sheet of paper, and instruct students to draw anything they want (as long as it's not offensive). Tell them not to talk with others about what they're drawing, if possible.

When students finish, ask them to pass their drawings to the left. Then, ask students to explain what's going on in the pictures they received. Return the pictures to their owners, and allow them to explain what the picture is supposed to show.

Explain that the drawings reflect the people who made them because the art reveals something about the artist; given the chance to draw anything, they chose to draw this. Likewise, humankind reflects God in His creative and compassionate ways. God's creation of humanity in the garden was intended to be a reflection of His goodness and character. Even though sin has distorted that image of God in humanity, we are still called to reflect and glorify God in all we do by showing people around us how good and satisfying He is.

Option 2

Ask students to list places or events they go often (home, athletic practices, church, carpool, restaurant, grocery store, etc.). After you compile the list, place students into groups. Assign each group a place or event to either act out.

Tell students to come up with three skits. The first skit should show what it would look like to relate to God in that place/event. The second skit should show what it would look like to relate to one another (preferably family or close friends) in a loving way. The third skit should show what it would look like to relate to the world properly (actions toward strangers or the environment). Allow students time to prepare their skits, then ask each group to present. (Note: It's okay to give guidance. Students may not immediately know how to relate to God in sports practice, but you could help them talk about constant prayer, asking the Lord to help them find strength, or seeking to honor the Lord as they play).

Discuss with the students what their good ideas were. Be sure to point out relating properly to any one of the three things we discussed (God, one another, the world) inevitably involves properly relating to the other two; for example, when you love your parents, you honor God and set a good example for the people in the world around you.

TEACHING PLAN

In the previous session, we traced the first five-and-a-half days of creation, seeing that God created everything good for His Son. Our story picks up where we left off, moving toward the climactic scene where God created something in a new and unique way: humanity. Mankind was created in God's image, a characteristic unique from all other parts of creation.

- **What comes to mind when you hear the phrase “created in God’s image”?**

Read Genesis 1:26-31.



What may be the greatest barrier to understanding our humanity comes from the fact that we assume we know what it means to be human. Who can understand humanity better than us, right? But that's the problem. Just because we are humans does not mean we understand what is at the core of humanity or that we are in the position to determine what gives us the value, purpose, and meaning we long for. Only God can do that, and we find out what it means to be human in these verses.

On the sixth day of creation, God's language changed. The details increased, and the Bible gives an explanation of not just what God created, but why.

Part of what it means to be created in God's image has to do with the fact that God has created us with the unique capacity to join Him as co-stewards of creation. We know that God is sovereign over all of His creation and doesn't require any help from anyone or anything, and yet in this chapter He created humans to join Him in His ruling efforts over the created order. God has singled out humanity for this task and placed us above all other creatures (Ps. 8:3-8). Because God values human life and sets it apart from all other life, we should do the same (Gen. 9:5-6). God has placed us as stewards over all creation and our rule should reflect its value, and more importantly the value of its Creator. The greatest way we bear the image of God is by valuing humanity, the pinnacle of His creation. Our rule over creation should be marked by a deep, unwavering regard for humanity, knowing that people of every tongue, tribe, and nation bear the image of God.

- **Place students in groups and assign each group one of the following. God made us responsible for caring for His creation. What are some ways we care for...oceans, endangered species, or national parks?**

99 Essential Doctrines (p. 16, DDG)

Image of God in Humanity

The image of God in humanity is understood as mirroring God's attributes in our nature, actions, and relational capacities. In Jesus, we see the true image of God. He perfectly mirrors God's attributes, fulfills God's will, and enjoys a perfect relationship with the Father. The Bible continues to speak of the image of God in humanity even after our fall into sin, even though our ability to rightly reflect God has been marred.

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
**God created people
uniquely in His Image.**

Genesis 1:26-31

When we talk about being created in God's image, most people assume this means God must look like us in a physical sense—He must have two arms, two legs, and be slightly taller than average. However, the Bible teaches that God is Spirit, so it must mean something beyond human physical features.

Through the story of the creation of man and woman, we begin to see what being created in God's image entails. God called Adam and Eve to rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth. His command for humans to fill and subdue the earth is an invitation to bear His image—to reflect Him by doing what He did in creating the heavens and the earth. Just as He filled the world with stars, vegetation, and living creatures, we are called to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth with life. And just as He brought order from chaos in separating the land from the seas, we are called to subdue the world in such a way that brings harmony and accord.

In this passage, we see that God is the ruler, and bearing His image means that we must also rule. But to reflect Him properly, we must rule wisely. Unfortunately, because of our sinfulness we tend to either worship creation or abuse it, to hold it up as if it were a god or to trample it as if it has no value. God's call to care for creation should lead us to worship Him for the good things He has given us, not to worship the good things themselves.

Timothy Keller makes a good point when he says:

“When we take a piece of land and garden/farm it, or preserve it so it can produce its peculiar life-splendors, when we take fabric and make a piece of clothing, when we push a broom to clean up a place, when we use technology to harness the forces of electricity, when we take an unformed, naïve human mind and teach it a subject, when we take unprocessed material and turn it into a poignant work of art, when we take undifferentiated tones and pitches (noise) and separate them out and arrange them to create music, (even when we pass a comb through our hair)—whenever we bring order out of chaos, whenever we draw out creative potential, whenever we elaborate and ‘unfold’ creation further than where it was when we found it—we are continuing God’s work of creative, cultural development.”¹

TEACHING PLAN

Read Genesis 2:16-18, 21-25.



▪ **What patterns do you see in these verses?**

Being created in God's image sets us apart from the rest of creation in yet another profound way—humanity alone has the capacity to be in a personal relationship with God. God did not create people because He was lonely and needed us. God has eternally enjoyed a perfect relationship of love, fellowship, and unity within His triune nature. We were created not to provide relationship for God, but for him to provide relationship for us. Humanity was created to enjoy the overflow of God's love.

▪ **Only people—not dogs, eagles, or whales—were created with the ability to have a relationship with God. What does this show us about the value God gives us?**

▪ **List some ways we can show how important our relationship with God is?**

To bear God's image doesn't point only to the relationship we have with God; we also have a relationship with one another. God created us "male and female" (Gen. 1:27). The God who exists in community—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—created human beings to live in community as well.

Activity

Come up with a list of things that come in pairs or often go together before you meet with your group. Examples include: peanut butter and jelly; burger and fries; bread and butter; Tom and Jerry; Mario and Luigi; bacon and eggs; Batman and Robin; and the like. Play charades with your list, asking students present those two at a time (e.g., two kids act out Tom and Jerry, or two kids try to act out bacon and eggs). When your group completes the list, ask if they recognize the pattern: Everything is a pair; they all relate! You can use this activity to explain that many great things come in relationships. Same goes for our world. Ask them how difficult it would be for one hand to clap, one lip to whistle, or to have a sandwich with only one piece of bread (not folded in half). We need relationships with God, with one another, and with the world!

▪ **We know all people are created in God's image. How should that affect the way we think about, talk about, and treat people like our best friends, the school bully, or the people playing for the opposing team?**

Adam and Eve were to obey God's instruction concerning the tree of knowledge, for no other reason than that. They were to trust the One who was completely trustworthy. Love the One who is love. But they failed and sin entered the world. We still possess this image of God, but because of sin, we are incapable of carrying it out. The fall has hindered our ability to love and obey God. But as sure as humanity's nature has been distorted by sin, God had a plan to restore His image that was disfigured in man. And this plan rested on Jesus, the perfect image of God (John 14:9; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3). We once again have the capacity to bear God's image through relationship with Him.

▪ **We all have difficult relationships. Name two relationships where you need to forgive someone or ask forgiveness. Try to do that this week.**

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
God created people
uniquely in His Image.

Genesis 2:1-3,15



2:1-3,15. In addition to rightly relating to God and rightly relating to others, a third aspect of being created in God's image has to do with the way we work and rest. A lot of people have wrongly assumed that the command to work was a result of man's sinning and rebelling against God. But the creation narrative shows us that God created work for man as part of His good world. Work is just as beautiful as the sunset, and just as purposeful as the rain.

Work isn't something that God gave man as a curse after the fall into sin; the toil of work is what came with sin, but work itself is designed to give us fulfillment and provide us an environment to reflect God. Humanity's ability to work provides us with great power within creation but our problem is that, when we're left to our own devices, we lack direction for that work. We are like the people of Babylon who set out to work together to build a tower, not in the image of God but in defiance of God (Gen. 11:1-9). We have amazing potential; however, our sin causes that potential to drive us away from the One who placed it within us.

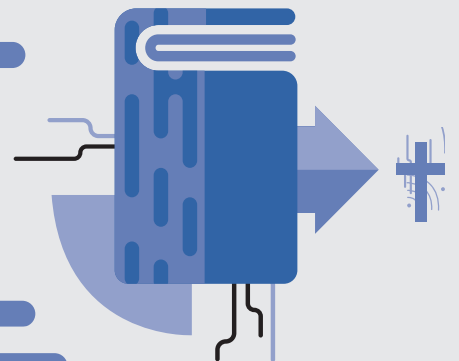
We have the ability to build bridges spanning across geographical barriers to bring people together and even unite cultures. However, we also have the capacity to barricade, destroy bridges, and divide people. We have the amazing ability to write documents like the Emancipation Proclamation. And we have the ability to write *For Whites Only* on signs as well. Humanity is both the glory and the garbage of the universe.

But there is good news. Our capacity and power to glorify God through work is not destroyed, only distorted. God's image can be seen in our work when we work for the Lord in His power (Col. 3:23). The gospel redeems our work today and gives us the hope that a day is coming when Christ will return and we will finally be able to glorify God perfectly in our work.

We can reflect God in our work, and we can also reflect Him in our rest. God did not rest in Genesis 2 because He needed it, as if He were tired or worn out. He gave us an example of rest to show that, even though we are unlike any other creature in that we are the most "like" God, we are not God. There is an unbridgeable difference between God and us. And one of the most critical ways that we can reflect Him to the world is by showing that we are not God.

(p. 18, DDG) Christ Connection

Part of the good news for us is that even though we constantly fail to properly reflect God's image in all that we do, Jesus came to be the perfect image of the invisible God. He is the only One who rules wisely over the world. He upholds all things by His power, and all of creation awaits in eager anticipation for His return. He is the only One who perfectly relates to God and others and can restore our broken relationships with God and others. He not only has a face-to-face relationship with God, but His face is the very face of God. And because of Jesus' good work on our behalf—His perfect life, death in our place, and glorious resurrection—we are invited into His rest. No longer striving for salvation but resting in His finished work.





GOD'S GOOD PEOPLE

God created people uniquely in His image.

JESUS CONNECTION



We constantly fail to reflect God's image in all that we do, but Jesus is the perfect image of the invisible God. He rules wisely over the world and upholds all things by His power. He is the only One who perfectly relates to God and others. And because of Jesus' good work on our behalf—His perfect life, death and resurrection—He alone can restore our broken relationships with both.



LIFEWISE QUALITY

RESPECT – Acting considerately toward people based on their God-given value and worth.



HEAD

After creating the man and woman on the sixth day, what specific commands did God give to humans?

Every human being is made in God's image and is, therefore, worthy of respect. What does it mean to treat someone with respect?



HEART

How should the fact that all humans were created in God's image influence how we treat others?

We rarely struggle to show respect to people (friends, teachers, parents) we like or get along with. But Jesus told us, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father, who is in Heaven" (Matthew 5:44–45). Why would God require us to show the same respect to those we don't like or don't get along with?



HANDS

Think of a friend, family member or someone in your life who you know has an opposite opinion or belief or who has been unkind to you. Give a concrete example of how you can show respect toward this person, since he or she is made in God's image and valuable to Him. Ask God to give you strength to do that.